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Panama: Arias supporters infiltrating from Costa Rica have clashed with a National Guard patrol. (Page 5)

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[Panama: Arias supporters, infiltrating from Costa Rica, and a National Guard patrol clashed on 29 November.

Two guardsmen and two guerrillas were killed. The 30 insurgents probably were trying to join a 100-man armed group reported to be in position at an "inaccessible place" in the isolated mountainous region.

[diversionary attacks along the border are part of a plan in which the real objective is to seize a remote province on the Caribbean having poor land communications with the rest of Panama. Presumably this would provide Arias with a base in which he could set up a rebel government.

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One of the pro-Arias guerrilla leaders was killed on 30 November in a small Costa Rican border town and the body taken into Panama. The killers are believed to have been Panamanian national guardsmen. The Costa Rican Government announced last night that it was closing the border with Panama because of "frontier incidents."

Arias may be planning to fly to Costa Rica and, possibly, to make his way across the border. Arias' presence in Panama probably would rally his supporters, but the move would be unlikely to improve significantly his chances of overthrowing the government.

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